

March 27, 2016

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Governor Haley,

We are appalled by the recent passage of The Refugees and Voluntary Resettlement Organizations bill by the senate. Our **thoughts are expressed perfectly by the enclosed editorial from the Spartanburg Herald Journal on March 27th. I urge you to read the editorial and to do all in your power to stop this surrendering to our fears. We urge you to stand up as a leader and do what is right to regain the high values of welcoming and compassion.**

Best regards,


John Groves


Brenda Groves

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QUESTIONS? Contact Editor Chris Horeth at

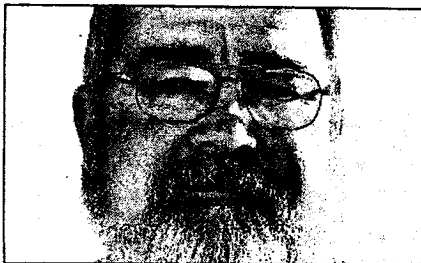
Herald-Journal

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ANOTHER VIEW

We are too scared to do what's right



MICHAEL SMITH

How much of our values and character are we going to let fear take from us?

Last week, the S.C. Senate passed a bill to require that refugees be registered with the state, investigated by state law enforcement and tracked. The bill seeks to hold groups that help refugees liable for crimes they may commit.

One of the bill's sponsors said the purpose of the legislation is to make the Palmetto State "an unwelcome place for refugees."

Is that really who we want to be? South Carolina: The Unwelcoming State? It's a poor replacement for "Smiling Faces, Beautiful Places."

Why are we willing to turn away those who are persecuted, those who are being killed, those who are in such trouble that they are willing to leave everything they know and travel to

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are persecuted for their faith, but we are willing to cast them aside with the rest. After all, even though they are Christians, they aren't really like us. They don't look or talk like us. That makes us suspicious.

where nothing is familiar?

Because we are afraid. We are so scared that some of them may be terrorists that we are willing to turn our backs on all of them.

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their faith, but we are willing to cast them aside with the rest. After all, even though they are Christians, they aren't really like us. They don't look or talk like us. That makes us suspicious.

We are so afraid of these people that we are lashing out at those who would help them. The churches and religious groups helping refugees would have to be liable for any harm they cause.

Where does that end? Should churches that help prison inmates and ex-convicts be held liable if those people commit another crime? Should churches that reach out to alcohol and drug addicts be held responsible if someone goes off the wagon and causes an accident? So much for ministering to "the least of these."

We like to think of South Carolina as a Christian state, but we are willing to ignore all the biblical requirements to take care of those who are strangers in our land. Why? Because we are too scared to do what's right.

We have seen the victim, beaten and bloody on the side of the road, and we have decided it's too risky to be the Good Samaritan. We have decided to turn our heads and pass by on the other side.

That's not who we are as a state. We can welcome those who aren't like us. We can have compassion for those in the direst need.

We can recognize our fears for what they are and refuse to let them undermine our character. We can be faithful to the values we've always claimed to hold dear.

—Mike Smith is the Herald-Journal's executive editor.